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December 14, 2010

Marlene Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Free conference calling  
Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers,  
WC Docket No. 07-135;

Dear Ms. Dortch:

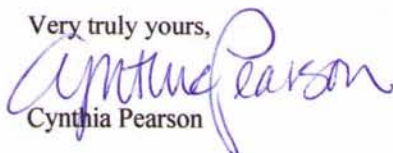
My name is Cynthia Pearson and I am the co-author of a book on caring for the dying (*Parting Company: Understanding the Loss of a Loved One – The Caregiver's Journey*, Seal Press, 1999) as well as a founding member and board secretary of the Take Charge of Your Life Partnership, a 501 c 3 non-profit corporation based in Pennsylvania. Our mission is to educate, support and empower all people to deal with end-of-life issues through an innovative network of consumers, professionals, community organizations and corporations. In order to achieve this goal, members of our organization often use free conference calling to conduct phone meetings.

I first discovered free conference calling when my 96-year-old mother was hospitalized with pneumonia. Using these services made it possible for me and my four siblings, who live in different parts of the country, to stay informed about her condition. She recovered but now requires fulltime assistance because of dementia, and we are grateful to be able to confer with one another about her care via conference calling.

Two years ago, the Take Charge Partnership won a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Aging to create a video series based on [Improving End-of-Life Experiences for Pennsylvanians: Report and Recommendations by the Task Force for Quality at the End of Life](#). These are now available at our website, <http://www.takechargeofyourlife.org> and were expressly designed to help individuals and families cope with end-of-life issues. One of the videos recommends free conference calling because it can be such a blessing for scattered families.

I am writing to you today because I have learned that Congress and the Federal Communications Commission are contemplating new rules that will do away with free conferencing services. I hope this will not come to pass, as it will mean that nonprofits with tiny budgets will lose a valuable tool; and that families across the United States will be less able to function in a time of crisis or over a long period of caregiving. In case members of the FCC do not know what a help it can be to get everybody on the line at the same time to discuss charitable, medical and/or caregiving concerns, I am taking it upon myself to mention it to you, and express the hope it will be a consideration as the Commission moves forward with its rulemaking.

Very truly yours,

  
Cynthia Pearson

CC: Chairman Julius Genachowski  
Commissioner Michael J. Copps  
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell  
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker